

A.C. FINCKEN & COMPANY LTD.

By Mike J. Burrows

In the Full Name Catalogue, page FN/F2 deals with the Force Food Company. From this page it will be seen that the marketing of the FORCE wheat flakes was taken over by A. C. Fincken in 1910.

Starting very cautiously to advertise the product with a series of press advertisements, "Sunny Jim" took a back seat and did not figure prominently in their campaign.

It was not until 1921 when Smith's Advertising Agency took over the promotion that he made a come back. In 1922 the "Sunny Jim" was made available on a large scale, but he may have made his first appearance as early as 1910.

In the so-called roaring twenties the intense advertising, both press and poster, produced the well-known jingle 'High O'er the Fence Leaps Sunny Jim, Force is the Food that Raises Him'.

The depressed thirties saw the golden age in FORCE advertising. Set against the background of long dole queues and hunger marches, 'Sunny Jim' and FORCE became household favourites. Many campaigns took place during this time and as part of the promotions several additional novelties were introduced for children. Such as Yo-Yo's, acrobats, miniature recordsy jigsaws and even a model FORCE plane,

One of the first radio commercials on Radio Luxembourg, Lyons and Normandy was to sell FORCE. The voice of 'Sunny Jim' was that of the well known broadcaster Norman Hackforth. The signature tune included the Westminster Chimes and the High O'er the Fence jingle, The broadcasts came to an end in 1939.

The prize in the children's painting competition was a wheatear spoon that had been introduced the same year that the broadcasts ended.

As would have been expected the imports of FORCE from Canada and America ceased soon after the outbreak of the second world war. For some time a utility version was produced in England.

In 1955 FORCE was relaunched, and in 1959, with the aid of commercial television, sales and production increased. Various offers, such as the re-introduction of the spoon and doll were followed by puppets, Tee shirts and a set of stainless steel cutlery,

Another relaunch in 1970 has seen that the father of the flaked breakfast in Britain has become more readily available.

During all this time the Company did not remain in the same location in London. From about 1920 and until 1936 the Offices were in Great Portland Street, W.1. From 1936 to 1952 in Euston Road, N.W.1.

1952 saw a move to Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1., which lasted until 1969. Today, they are to be found in Watford.

The war already mentioned made several perfin users relocate their offices outside London for the duration. A. C. Fincken & Company were no exception. From 1939 onwards to 1947 they also had offices in Cheltenham.

In the archives of the Company there exists an example of a POKO affixer. It is believed that this coil stamp affixing apparatus was used in the Cheltenham offices.

This apparatus produced the perfino

Cat. No. 113          AC/F          10,10/8          5½mm.

All my example, on K.E.Vlll ½d, K.G.VI dark brown 1½d and light red ld, have the usual wavy line cancels, so the location of the apparatus has not as yet been confirmed.

A director of the Company, Brian R. Fincken, believes that they also purchased perfins from Slopers. He is of the opinion that the perf in was ACF/&Co but admits that he could be wrong.

Acknowledgement :    These notes would not have been possible without the assistance given by Brian R. Fincken, a director of A.C. Fincken & Company Limited, and the co-operation of member E.D. Chambers. My thanks to both of them.